

What They're Saying About The OPEN Government Act (Updated)

"Sens. John Cornyn, R-Texas, and Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., co-sponsors of the bill, deserve a big heaping of praise for doggedly working to keep the bipartisan reform package alive through a series of back-and-forths between the Senate and House chambers. ... Throughout Cornyn's service as an elected official – from Texas attorney general to state Supreme Court judge to U.S. senator – he has remained a consistent advocate for more openness and less secrecy. The people of Texas and the nation are well served in this arena by his work." (Editorial, "Good Work, Folks," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 12/28/07)

"Cornyn appears to be one of those somewhat rare members of government who have a strong awareness of the importance of keeping up the pressure for open government. ... More significantly, adoption of the Open Government Act shows he is willing and able to back up his convictions by getting positive action." (Editorial, "Transparency In Government Gets Needed Legislative Push," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, 12/27/07)

"Cornyn, who helped improve Texas' open records laws when he was attorney general here, deserves a pat on the back for his part in passing the new federal legislation. ... We are pleased with the work Cornyn, Leahy and other FOI advocates did on this new law. As Cornyn said, it really is a victory for U.S. citizens who deserve to know what their government is doing." (Editorial, "Open Records," *Lufkin Daily News*, 1/3/08)

"There is one achievement people should applaud. It is the Open Government Act, championed by U.S. Sen. John Cornyn of Texas along with Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-VT., which was approved by both the Senate and House in the past few days. ... Texas has long had one of the nation's strongest open government laws, and it after that example the Washington version was patterned. Cornyn had a key role in enforcing that law when he served in state government as attorney general." (Editorial, "Transparency In Government Gets Needed Legislative Push," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, 12/27/07)

"It was a much-needed step toward public disclosure that should force government agencies to respond to records requests in a timely manner. The bill was sponsored by Texas Republican Sen. John Cornyn and Vermont Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy, and both fought hard for it." (Editorial, "Pulling Curtains Open On Government," *Austin American-Statesman*, 1/6/08)

"A democratic society requires transparent government. The Cornyn-Leahy initiative that has been signed into law by President Bush takes the nation a significant step in that direction." (Editorial, "Cornyn, Leahy Open Government To Public," *Amarillo Globe-News*, 1/3/08)

"Shepherded through Congress by Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and John Cornyn, R-Texas, the Open Government Act strengthens the FOIA, the first such update in more than a decade. ... No matter at what level – local, state or federal – The Star has long-argued against any attempt by government to close off sources of information. That's why strengthening the law that gives the public access to government records is so important." (Editorial, "Bush Signs Openness Bill," *Ventura County Star* [CA], 1/6/08)

"The Radio-Television News Directors Association applauds members of Congress on both sides of the aisle for approving legislation to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act." (Radio-Television News Directors Association, "House, Senate Send Important FOIA Legislation To President For Consideration," Press Release, 12/19/07)

- **"'This is a huge advancement for open government, thanks to the leadership of Senators Leahy, Cornyn and Kyl and Representatives Waxman and Platts,' says RTNDA president Barbara Cochran. 'But this isn't just a victory**

for journalists; **it's a victory for every single member of the American public.** This legislation will eliminate some of the lengthy delays and persistent backlogs in the FOIA process that create obstacles and limit the public's ability to make informed choices in their communities.'" (Radio-Television News Directors Association, "House, Senate Send Important FOIA Legislation To President For Consideration," Press Release, 12/19/07)

"The first significant reform in more than a decade of the federal Freedom of Information Act, signed into law this week by President Bush, is an important step forward for open government and the ability of citizens to hold their government representatives accountable for their actions." (Editorial, "No' As A Rare Option," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 1/3/08)

"We are pleased that the President has signed the OPEN Government Act, which builds on his Executive Order on the FOIA and expands it," said Patrice McDermott, director of **OpentheGovernment.org**, a coalition of groups advocating government transparency that strongly supported the legislation. 'This statute will make FOIA a stronger tool for government accountability to the public.'" ("Bush Signs Bill to Reform FOIA, Measure Promotes Agency Transparency," *Bureau Of National Affairs*, 1/3/08)

"After years of growing government secrecy, today's vote reaffirms the public's fundamental right to know," said Rick Blum of the Sunshine in Government Initiative, which represents 10 media organizations. **'This bill makes commonsense changes to help the public know what government is up to.'**" (Laurie Kellman, "Congress Expands FOIA To Allow Access To More Government Records," *Associated Press*, 12/19/07)

"Congress this week moved to make the federal government more open and accountable. ... Once it becomes law ... these reforms will do much to make government more accessible." ("Editorial: Kyl Helps Open-Records Bill," *Arizona Republic*, 12/20/07)

"People worldwide have admired America for its openness in government, yet in past years we've moved backwards toward secrecy," said Dave Ledford, president of the **Associated Press Managing Editors** and editor of **The News Journal of Wilmington, Del.** **'This bill is a positive step forward.'**" (Laurie Kellman, "Congress Expands FOIA To Allow Access To More Government Records," *Associated Press*, 12/19/07)

"The ACLU applauds Congress for passing a bill to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the law that allows Americans to find out what their government is up to." (ACLU, "Information Even More Free With Passage Of Bill To Strengthen FOIA," Press Release, 12/18/07)

- ACLU Policy Counsel Mike German: "For over 40 years, FOIA has been one of the strongest tools Americans have to obtain government records created at taxpayer expense, and **the OPEN Government Act makes FOIA more effective.** This law will be a first step to make sure FOIA's original purpose doesn't disappear into the shadows of a closed government bureaucracy. Americans have the right to know whether their government is acting in their interests or acting to hide the truth, and strengthening FOIA is a way to hold our officials accountable. **We applaud Congress for making this move toward a more transparent government.**" (ACLU, "Information Even More Free With Passage Of Bill To Strengthen FOIA," Press Release, 12/18/07)

"Passage of the FOIA bill will allow not only members of the press but all Americans to hold their government more accountable," **Society of Professional Journalists** President Clint Brewer said. 'In a time when First Amendment rights are under attack almost daily in this country, **this bill is a major step to ensuring America has a free press and a government that is transparent and open.**'" (The Society Of Professional Journalists, "SPJ Leaders Commend Passage Of Amended FOIA Bill In House," Press Release, 12/18/07)